

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations

Attached are the OCI reactions to the latest of the long list of Polgargrams taking issue with OCI reporting. I have no problems with Tom taking issue with anything that we do, but I would like to add my endorsement to Lehman's comments, particularly to his plea that somehow or other you get Polgar to knock it off. Even if we assume that Polgar's motivations are to get us to do our job better, the methods he uses are not calculated to nourish any kind of enduring and effective working relationship.

Paul V. Walsh  
ADDI

31 October 1974  
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

Original Blue Note w/att to Addressee

① DDI File w/att

1 - D/OCI (w/cy Blue Note only w/o att)

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DDI-3161-74

DOC 431-74

30 October 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations  
THROUGH : Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Latest Communication from Polgar

1. You will find attached the unemotional comments that you asked for. Speaking with somewhat more emotion myself, I should say that my troops are getting rather tired of turning the other cheek. These repeated aspersions on their objectivity, ancestry, and even loyalty are extremely damaging to their morale and to the Agency image. We have had any number of discussions with COS Saigon but seem unable to make any dent in his perception of OCI as an ally of the VC. I submit that OCI in regard to Vietnam has been at least as objective as has the US mission in Saigon.

2. Saigon Station's reporting is excellent and essential, but we in Washington must of necessity have a perspective different from that held in the field. This doesn't make either party automatically right. We will correct our mistakes when we make them, but it remains our duty to call things as we see them. There will always be differences between us and Saigon on substance, and we believe continued unemotional debate on these differences is extremely valuable. I would hope, however, that Saigon Station could bring itself to conduct this debate without questioning our motives or our competence. It is, after all, one Agency.

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3. In short, we are getting a little tired of this and I hope you will tell Polgar to knock it off.



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RICHARD LEHMAN  
Director of Current Intelligence

Attachment: a/s

Distribution:

Original and 1 - addressee w/att, w/cy basic  
1 - ADDI w/att, w/cy basic  
1 - DOCI w/att, w/cy basic  
1 - file

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25 October 1974

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Comments on Criticism of OCI Reporting  
on Vietnam

1. After carefully reviewing the comments of Mr. Polgar and the US Mission in Saigon, we are inclined to conclude that these objections reside not so much in the text of the article on cutbacks in the use of artillery by the South Vietnamese as in a concern with regard to inferences or conclusions some of our senior consumers in Washington might draw from this article. We would emphasize that the item was conceived solely as a straightforward account of the facts and initial consequences of recent reductions in the use of artillery. It was in no way intended as a commentary on the RVNAP's ability to adjust to the \$700 million DAV appropriation, nor as an implicit judgment that this level of assistance would be sufficient if the RVNAP would stop wasting ammunition. Readers can fault any item of finished intelligence on points of scope, detail, or judgment, but the Directorate of Intelligence and other production elements in the intelligence community have always operated on the understanding that most of our consumers recognize that we are definitely not in the business of attempting to influence US policy. Some of our consumers, in fact, have complained over the years that intelligence production is not sufficiently responsive and relevant to US policy concerns.

2. We note Mr. Polgar's concern that "OCI tends to write too quickly and on occasion in a misleading fashion about current developments in Vietnam." We would only observe that the current intelligence mission requires the prompt reporting and evaluation of significant information and developments, and that items published in the

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NID and the NIB, whatever their point of origin--CIA, DIA or INR--are coordinated to the maximum extent permitted by the pressure of deadlines. In the case of the article on South Vietnamese artillery, OCI submitted a draft for coordination after consultation with DIA over a period of two days. DIA, in fact, provided most of the detailed information and judgments contained in this article.

3. As for the comments by the US Mission in Saigon, we have the impression that these are addressed more to the scope of the article than to its details and conclusions. The Mission's principal criticism is that the item failed to place the details in the broader context of the nature of the Vietnam conflict and to emphasize the longer range concerns of South Vietnamese military leaders. This may be a fair criticism, but we would note again that the article was intended only to provide a preliminary comment on the initial effects of the artillery cutbacks, not to examine long term implications.

4. On questions of fact, we do not find major differences between the article and the US Mission's comments. The Mission speaks with two voices on the fundamental judgment that the cutbacks "have not yet led to higher casualties or the loss of significant new territory to the communists." In regard to casualties, Ambassador Martin states flatly that "the exact reverse is the fact." The CIA Station and the DAO, on the other hand, concede that our judgment "may be true," but they raise technical questions about the basis for comparison, particularly since final casualty figures for September are not yet available. The Station characterizes the statement that "during the fairly intense fighting in July and August, the government fired approximately 300 artillery shells for each communist shell fired" as "grossly misleading" because it failed to count communist rockets and because the South Vietnamese have no comparable rockets. The Station asserts that a more meaningful ratio of all types of fire would be about 13 to 1. The article, however, specifically noted that the 300 to 1 ratio relates only to artillery and that, this ratio excludes rockets and mortars.

5. On the central question of whether there is an ammunition shortage, the article addresses only the current situation in concluding that "most of our reports indicate that the South Vietnamese are not short of ammunition." The Embassy concedes that "in a very narrow sense it may be

correct to say there is currently no ammunition shortage." The Mission, however, clearly would have preferred to see greater emphasis on the "truly critical point" that South Vietnamese military leaders are seriously concerned about what they view as an uncertain source of resupply in future contingencies. The DAO, moreover, registers minor differences regarding artillery expenditure figures for the delta and the northern part of the country. We would note, in this connection, that DIA has informed the DAO that the article was based on information that had been reported by the Mission and has requested the DAO henceforth to provide more timely and complete details.

6. Finally, the Embassy challenges the conclusion that the South Vietnamese military leaders' initial reservations about the effects of the cutbacks "do not appear to have been borne out." The Embassy terms this "absurd" and claims that South Vietnamese commanders are daily "expressing their concern about the effects of the cutbacks on their ability to fight the war and on troop morale." The article's concluding judgment, however, was based on our total holdings of Embassy and Station reporting. The Embassy had not previously reported these "daily" expressions of concern. Several Station reports, on the other hand, had noted that some senior commanders had voiced confidence in their ability to cope with the situation created by the cutbacks.

7. In conclusion, we feel it is appropriate to call attention to what, in our view, is a fundamental difference in reporting philosophy between the field and headquarters. The Embassy comments included a suggestion that "it would be more useful" if the intelligence community concentrated on such questions as ammunition available to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces and the North Vietnamese logistic system into South Vietnam. The implied message here is that the Embassy feels that South Vietnamese developments fall within a special, reserved category and should therefore not be subject to the same approach in reporting and evaluation the intelligence community applies to other countries. We in headquarters fully understand the historical and psychological factors that underlie this view, and we suspect that many of us would be sympathetic to it should we find ourselves on the Saigon end of the wire. But in all fairness, it should be recognized that the Washington community is obliged to operate from a different vantage point. In the case of DDI production offices, our superiors indicated specifically, following the conclusion of the Paris Agreements in January 1973, that we should move in the direction

of applying the same standards of reporting and analysis to South Vietnam that have long been used in treating other allies and clients of the US. It seems to us that this approach is entirely proper in the prevailing circumstances and that it should not be necessary to defend or justify this requirement.

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SPEED LETTER		REPLY REQUESTED		DATE	21 Oct 1974	25X1
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	LETTER NO.		
TO : D/OCI - Mr. Richard Lehman		FROM:		DDO		25X1
ATTN:						
SUBJECT: Tom Polgar's Memo re Concern Over the Tone and Accuracy of OCI Reporting on Vietnam ( )						25X1
I'd appreciate your views after you have given unemotional review.						
( ) William E. Nelson						25X1
( )						25X1
REPLY				SIGNATURE		
				DATE		
Approved For Release 2005/08/24 : CIA-RDP80B01495R000600130018-6						
RETURN TO ORIGINATOR						SIGNATURE



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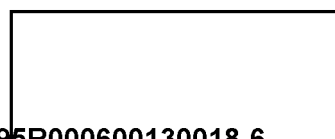
MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, OCI

ATTENTION: Mr. Richard Lehman

VIA: Chief, East Asia Division  
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT: Concern Over the Tone and Accuracy of  
OCI Reporting on Vietnam

1. I wish to call to your attention Saigon Embtel 13324, dated 17 October 1974, which contains Ambassador Martin's response to Department of State telegram 219262, in which the Ambassador was asked to comment on OCI's article about the effect of the cutback of ammunition to the South Vietnamese forces. The Ambassador has replied quite extensively on the substance and has also expressed his dismay that "the U.S. intelligence community seems to be either again sinking into the temptation to influence policy by the tone of its reporting on Vietnam or is guilty of an inexcusably naive and superficial treatment of a complex and intricate subject".
2. During my several visits to Headquarters and also in messages from the Station, I have had a number of occasions to acquaint you and other OCI personnel with my concern that particularly in the Daily Bulletin OCI tends to write too quickly and on occasion in a misleading fashion about current developments in Vietnam. I am not prepared to go as far as the Ambassador and suggest that the purpose of these articles is to bring influence against the current U.S. policy in Vietnam. On the other hand, I certainly feel that in several recent instances complex problems were handled in a superficial and slipshod manner and certainly did not bring any credit to the Agency.
3. I respectfully suggest that given the current tempo of activities in Vietnam there is no need to set time limits in such an arbitrary



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fashion that compliance would by necessity be at the expense of accuracy and careful coordination. I simply cannot accept that emphasis on speed should serve as alibi or excuse for the production of such careless work as the article to which now the Ambassador (and previously the Station) has objected.



Tom Polgar

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